IN THE SPECIFICATION:

At page 1, line 7-9, please replace the text with the following paragraph:

This application is a continuation of utility application Serial No. 09/216,430, filed 18December, 1998, now U.S. Patent No. 6,734,283, issued May 11, 2004, which is a continuation-in-part of provisional application Serial No. 60/068,209, filed 19 December 1997, and a continuation-in-part of provisional application Serial No. 60/096,525, filed 12 August 1998.

Please replace the paragraphs at page 32, line 1 through page 33, line 14, with the following paragraphs:

The terms "specifically homologous", "specifically complementary" and "specifically hybridizes" are as used previously. A "recombinant expression element" is a nucleic acid sequence which encodes NCE1 or NCE2, or a portion encoding at least 20 contiguous amino acids thereof, or a dominant negative mutant thereof, or is capable of expressing an antisense molecule specifically complementary thereto, or a sense molecule specifically homologous thereto wherein the recombinant expression unit may be in the form of linear DNA or RNA, covalently closed circular DNA or RNA, or as part of a chromosome, provided however that it cannot be the native chromosomal locus for NCE1 or NCE2. Preferred recombinant expression elements are vectors, which may include an origin of replication and are thus replicatable in one or more cell type. Certain preferred recombinant expression elements are expression vectors, and further comprise at least a promoter and passive terminator, thereby allowing transcription of the recombinant expression element in a bacterial, fungal, plant, insect or mammalian cell. Preferred recombinant expression elements have at least 75% nucleic acid sequence identity with the nucleic acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO [[2]] 3 OR SEQ ID NO [[4]] 5, more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, and most preferably at least 99%, and encode a protein or peptide having either NCE1 or NCE2 biological activity or activity as a dominant negative mutant thereof, as further described below.

"Dominant negative mutants" are proteins or peptides derived from NCE1 or NCE2 which inhibit the biological activity of, respectively NCE1 or NCE2. Preferred dominant negative mutants include variants in which the C at position 111 of NCE1 or position 116 of NCE2 is substituted, preferably by S. Preferred dominant negative mutants interfere with association of NEDD8 and NCE1 or NCE2 and can be derived from, respectively, NCE1 or NCE2. Other preferred dominant negative mutants interfere with conjugation of NEDD8 to a target protein and can be derived from either NCE1 or NCE2. Such dominant negative mutants

can be prepared by art recognized procedures (see e.g., Townsley et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 94: 2362-2367 (1997)). Preferably, such dominant negative mutant is a protein or peptide having from 50% amino acid sequence identity to about 99% identity to the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO [[3]] 4 or SEQ ID NO [[5]] 6, or to a portion or protein conjugate thereof which inhibits the biological activity of NCE1 or NCE2 to form a thioester linkage with NEDD8 under conditions as described in the following examples by at least 50%, preferably by at least 75%, more preferably by at least 90% and most preferably by at least 99%. Preferably, such inhibitory portion comprises an amino acid sequence spanning residue 111 in FIG. 2 or residue 116 in FIG. 5, more preferably comprises at least about 25 additional amino acids of respectively NCE1 or NCE2, even more preferably at least about 50 additional amino acids of respectively NCE1 or NCE2, still more preferably at least about 75 additional amino acids of respectively NCE1 or NCE2, yet even more preferably at least about 100 additional amino acids of respectively NCE1 or NCE2, most preferably at least about 150 additional amino acids from respectively NCE1 or NCE2.